

## REMARKS

This application has been carefully reviewed in light of the final Office Action dated January 12, 2007. Claims 17 to 32 are pending in the application, with Claims 27, 30, and 32 having been amended. Claims 17, 25, 27, 30, and 32 are in independent form. Reconsideration and further examination are respectfully requested.

Applicants have not yet received an indication that the document cited in the January 5, 2007 Information Disclosure Statement has been considered. The Examiner is respectfully requested to return an initialed copy of the Form PTO-1449 that accompanied the Information Disclosure Statement.

Two replacement drawing sheets are being submitted herewith. The replacement sheets include the changes required in the Office Action. In particular, a --Prior Art-- legend has been added to each of Figures 9 to 11.

Applicants gratefully acknowledge the indication that Claim 29 contains allowable subject matter.

Claims 27, 30, and 32 were objected to for informalities. The objection is respectfully traversed, and is submitted to have been obviated by the amendments made to Claims 27, 30, and 32.

Claims 17 to 28 and 30 to 32 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) over U.S. Patent No. 6,965,239 (Yasuda). The rejection is respectfully traversed.

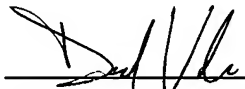
Applicants respectfully submit that Yasuda is not prior art by virtue of the March 28, 2003 filing date of the Japanese priority application, namely Japan 2003-89465. A sworn translation of the Japanese priority application was submitted on January 8, 2007.

In accordance with MPEP § 201.15, the Examiner is respectfully requested to confirm for himself that Applicants are entitled to their priority date.

No other matters being raised, it is believed that the entire application is fully in condition for allowance, and such action is courteously solicited.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our Costa Mesa, California office at (714) 540-8700. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below-listed address.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Damond E. Vadnais', is written over a horizontal line.

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